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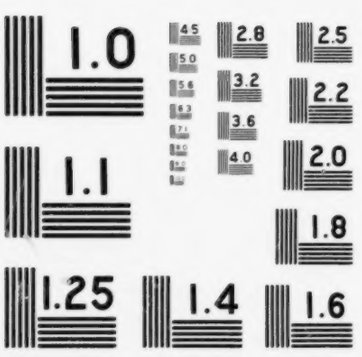

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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Mobilization for Youth (MFY) is a broad, community based, non-profit, private organization, attempting to reduce juvenile delinquency in the lower East Side of New York City by providing opportunities for juveniles to behave as productive members of society.

MFY provides youth employment and training through its Youth Job Center, an Urban Youth Work Corps, and on-the-job training. MFY works with the board of education to provide better opportunities for culturally disadvantaged children through remediation and guidance for pre-school and unschooled children and for dropouts; instruction, consultation, home-visiting, and material for teachers are also provided.

MFY works with families and the community to provide cultural, athletic, social and recreation activities as well as centers for consultation and aid in welfare problems and housing.

Research and evaluation are carried on by Columbia University to study juvenile delinquents and their families and to evaluate MFY action programs.

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MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH
214 East 2nd St., New York City 10009

FACT SHEET NO. 1

Objectives and Programs

WHAT IS MFY? Mobilization for Youth is an experimental action-research project seeking to reduce juvenile delinquency in a 67-block area of the Lower East Side of New York by developing, demonstrating and evaluating new approaches to the root causes of the problem--including poverty and discrimination. Neither a governmental, city-wide or national organization, MFY is a private, non-profit corporation conceived by agencies and institutions in its area. Its program was announced by President John F. Kennedy on May 31, 1962 (following a two-year planning period).

WHY? By any standard, the Lower East Side is a depressed or "slum" area. And MFY is the outgrowth of one manifestation of conditions in such areas, spiralling rates of delinquency which increased 70% in a three-year period.

HOW: MFY's broad-scale, community oriented approach (involving education, work training for young people, community development, and the provision of essential services) springs from the "opportunity theory."* The theory holds that no effort to prevent juvenile delinquency can succeed which does not provide young people with genuine opportunities to behave differently--especially through creative educational and exciting work programs. And that this effort must involve local residents directly in the improvement of the social and economic opportunities which their community affords to young people. As the 1961 MFY proposal states:

> We believe that obstacles to economic and social betterment among low-income groups are responsible for delinquency. Poverty imposes handicaps upon the potential of young people for achievement, as do discriminatory barriers based on race and religion...**

Thus, Mobilization for Youth fired one of the first shots in the current "war on poverty". Here are a few specific indications of the project's approach...

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* Cloward and Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs. Glencoe, Ill. The Free Press (1960).

** Mobilization for Youth: A Proposal for the Prevention and Control of Delinquency by Expanding Opportunities (Dec. 9, 1961)

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Action Programs

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING. While not pretending to solve the city's or the nation's employment problems, this program has broken new ground in many areas as it seeks to help slum youths to break out of the poverty circle by becoming more employable. Its Youth Job Center encompasses evaluation, guidance, work preparation, and efforts designed to overcome reading and psychological disabilities among high school dropouts and unemployed graduates 16 to 21. Other components include a subsidized Urban Youth Work Corps (14 projects ranging from a luncheonette to a service station, from an industrial sewing shop to building repair projects), On-the-Job Training (with such private employers as hospitals, utilities and department stores), trade training and part-time work for in-school youths.

EDUCATION. A battery of experimental programs, advanced cooperatively with the city's Board of Education, aim to overcome barriers facing children in disadvantaged areas, thus making them employable through education. Twelve components provide instruction, remediation and guidance for pre-school and in-school children and for dropouts; instruction, consultation, home-visiting and material for teachers and prospective teachers; educational services for parents, and others.

SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES. Urgent need compels the provision of short-term service while experimentation proceeds in other programs. Often taking new forms, this service is dispensed at storefront Neighborhood Service Centers, by means of Visiting Homemakers and through such programs as Social Reintegration (for juvenile offenders) and School-Community Relations, among others. Focusing on the poor, SIF works with "walk-ins" (50%) and referrals. It provides first aid and acts as a broker, increasing the use and usefulness of community resources. Closely related is the LEGAL SERVICES UNIT, a small, comparative newcomer (Jan. '64) whose impact has been national as it pioneered in dramatizing the need for and approaches to legal service for the poor.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT-GROUP SERVICES. A major MFY thrust involves increasing the participation of local residents in activities and decision-making which affects them. Working with new groups and strengthening older ones, MFY has focused concern on such issues as voting, education, employment, housing and civil rights. The project also experiments with new approaches to pre-delinquents and older youths, emphasizing the cultural arts and in athletic, social and other recreational activities. The Adventure Corps (9 to 15 year old youths) and Detached Worker (street gang) programs operate through

contracts with local institutions and with the city's Youth Board. The Young Adult Action Group (16-21) provides an outlet for social protest and constructive social action.

HOUSING. Many of MFY's activities touch, in one way or another, upon housing problems. In addition, a specific unit seeks short-term solutions to certain problems in this area by stressing code compliance, rehabilitation and community involvement, and by trying to effect institutional change in public and private sectors involved in the expansion of low-rent housing.

Research Program

RESEARCH & EVALUATION. Three types of research, directed by the Columbia University School of Social Work, were interwoven in the original MFY proposal.** These include (1) basic research on substantive issues designed to profile juvenile delinquency, (2) evaluation of the net impact of the program on the attitudes and actions of the community's residents, and (3) evaluation of specific service programs.

Moving ahead of the action program, research paved the way for adequate evaluation by establishing a "baseline" during the two-year planning period against which future changes in the community could be measured.

Other Activities

PROGRAM AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT are major activities at MFY, encompassing reporting on experiences, materials development, graduate student field work, a college program for socially disadvantaged youth, and in-service training for MFY staff. Among the other departments and units: Fiscal Services, Public Relations, Personnel, and Referral unit.

STAFF. The project's staff numbers 360 persons, including 166 professional, 71 semi-professional, 109 clerical and 14 maintenance workers. Services to Individuals and Families (64 contract and 38 direct employees), Education (54 contract, 33 direct), and Work (77) are the largest units.

Please see "Fact Sheet No. 2" for information on program participation. See MFY News Bulletin (Summer 1965) for sources of funds and program expenditures

June, 1965